

We are at the end of summer and for many of us our race season is winding down. Thanks to everyone for their support over the summer, especially for the mini-tri's which were a success. Two people from my office participated and we have two new converts.

Jenn always closes her President's Corner with the saying: 'Train hard, train safe....and go fast'. To this I would add stay healthy. Something I've been thinking a lot about lately.

This time next year we will know the outcome of the Beijing Olympics triathlon—assuming that the outdoor races go ahead. China has a major problem with air quality (Chinese air quality is an oxymoron) and recently they tried banning vehicles from Beijing to see what effect it would have. Officially quite a bit, from those in Beijing at the time, hardly any. A few weeks ago they had the 'Good Luck Games' in Beijing to test the course. "My lungs hurt to breathe but it's not the dirtiest place I've raced," said Australian racer Cadel Evans. "Racing in an Italian city you get dirtier from diesel fumes, but it's the humidity here that surprised me and the combination of pollution and humidity makes it a bit harder." Michael Rogers added: "Definitely quite heavy conditions, but personally I had no problems with breathing. I spend a fair bit of time near Milan so I'm used to riding with the pollution."

While China may be a bit extreme, what about the USA? Active.com had a recent article which noted that given the pollutants that can be in the air, "people who exercise outdoors should probably be more worried" than many are. Check out the article at:

http://www.active.com/running/Articles/Exercising_Outdoors_How_Does_Pollution_Affect_Athletes_.htm

As if that wasn't enough to worry about, in this issue we have an excellent and thought provoking article from Dr. Al Delaney on the dangers we endurance athletes face from deep vein thrombosis. Be sure to read it ... and importantly, act on his recommendations.

So as we enter the final months of the year I hope you've had a positive season and stay healthy so you can continue enjoying this great sport of triathlon (or even duathlons!).

Chris Bennett



Mary and her Merry Men at the Mini-Tris

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Capital Area Triathlon Club

PO Box 2763
Merrifield, VA 22116
Editor: Chris Bennett - chris@lpcb.org

Mark Your Calendars:

September 18: TriCATs Club Meeting – Rhodeside Grill, Arlington



President's Corner

Jenn Brown
swimbikerunjenn@yahoo.com



And with that, summer is nearly over, along with many of our racing seasons. I hope that everyone achieved personal success this summer, in whatever ways you define success. I normally try to resist bringing my personal experiences into this column, but feel as though sharing lessons learned this summer may, in fact, benefit some of you as well.

When I started training for triathlons in 2003, I was relatively new to the entire "athletic" scene. As a competitive cheerleader, softball catcher and company ballerina, personal success was purely subjective....based on a judge, or coach, or instructor. I put little energy into comparing myself to others in terms of success, since it was rare to go "head-to-head" with another dancer on stage.

After my first few triathlons in the summer of 2004, I was hooked. Hooked on the cheers as I exited the water, the excitement of speed on my bike, and the adrenaline rush of crossing the finish line. I also loved the feeling of competition, although in those early races, I was unsure how to harness that competitive nature. As I continued training and racing, I found it difficult to gauge success and growth in the sport, and easily slipped into a habit of measuring myself against my peers. My goals were based on where I finished in the pack compared to others, who I beat, and who came in behind me. I considered myself successful if I met or exceeded my goals, and berated myself if I got beat. I left many races disappointed in my final placement and to this day, have negative feelings on multiple occasions towards otherwise "successful" days that I let become overshadowed by an un-reached (and sometimes unattainable) goal.

This summer, I decided to hang up my tri bike for a few months and concentrated on off-road, XTERRA triathlons and mountain biking. Again, I was hooked...but this time on something completely different. I love the friendly, helpful, social atmosphere of the off-road races. I watch these accomplished athletes welcome newbies as they would old friends and create a comfortable, inclusive atmosphere at any start line. It is rare to come away from an XTERRA not having made a new friend on either the bike or run leg.



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<http://sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/tricats/>

Join the TriCats discussion group to keep abreast of the latest news and events.

I joined a women's team that was uniquely noncompetitive (internally) and subsequently hugely supportive. As I became more comfortable in this environment and felt the need to begin setting goals, my old nature reared its ugly head again, and I found myself judging my own success by comparing myself to those around me. This was the fastest route to a lower self-confidence in my performance, and a sour outlook on my racing in general. My good friend, Frank, recently blogged, "The only person that is fair for you to measure yourself against is yourself." What a difference this outlook can make to one's attitude. It was a huge wake-up call that I desperately needed. I can only control what I can control: my training, my preparation, my mental fortitude. If I am always concerned with what everyone around me is doing, then I'll never race/train/compete to my full potential. And worst, I will never be able to truly look at my own performance and see success.



So as the season ends and you look back on your race(s), measure your success based on YOU. Did YOU train the way you wanted? Did YOU give it all you had out there and if not, did you learn from the mistakes you made? Did you improve on your abilities from last year? If you

answered yes, then celebrate your success. For some of us, success this season was learning to stay in your aero bars for an entire 40K, committing to getting up at 4:45am for swim practice, riding further in one day than you did last year, or racing your very first triathlon. Success was also riding the entire Westernport Wall, swimming open water for 9 miles, qualifying for Nationals or finishing 2nd at the Chicago Triathlon.



However you measure your success, make sure you are challenging yourself, measuring your own abilities and focusing your attitude on the best that YOU can be. You can't control who's going to toe that start line, or what they do when the gun goes off. Race YOUR race, and knowing you left it all on the course....THAT is what defines success.

Now go enjoy the off-season.

Train hard, train safe....and go fast.

Travel Risks for Endurance Athletes: Or How Being Healthy Can Kill You

Allen DeLaney, MD, ME

As an endurance athlete you experience many benefits of your good health. Good diet and endurance exercise significantly improve your chances of surviving a heart attack and almost surely reduce the chance that you will ever have one. Endurance athletes generally have far

fewer deaths from what the statisticians call "all cause" reasons. If you are a woman you may well have a lower risk of developing breast cancer. You can get your daily legal high from the regular endorphin release during endurance exercise. Your joints will probably last just as long as those of couch potatoes, and you are much less likely to need prolonged nursing home care prior to departing this world.

However, air, train, and car trips may expose you to excessive risks of blood clots that are practically unknown and unexpected by your doctors and certainly are off your radar screen from a health risk perspective!

Just the fact that you are an endurance athlete means you have an increased risk of developing blood clots when you travel and recent competition even further increases your risk.

Traveling in planes exposes us to reduced air pressures equivalent to 6,000 to 8,000+ feet of elevation. Humidity levels are kept low to decrease costs and to prevent condensation and the corrosive destruction of the aircraft skin and structure. (Moisture condensing on the aluminum parts cooled by the -70 temps outside at 37,000 feet causes this.)

We spend much of our flight time seated with our legs in a dependent position. Literature research suggests that the net result of these environmental and low activity patterns of modern jet travel is an increase in the incidence of Deep Vein Thrombosis or DVT. DVT is the abnormal formation of clots in your veins, usually in the leg or pelvic veins. The incidence of DVT after airplane travel is also increased over what we would expect by simply sitting for the same period of time say in a movie theater for reasons that are largely unexplained by science at this point. (see <http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/527482>)

However, when we put this science together with some incidence data from other sources, it appears that endurance athletes may suffer increased risk compared to the general population that is largely unreported. One study suggests that as much as 3/4 of all DVT and Pulmonary Embolism or PE in air travelers, without other known risk factors, occurs in endurance athletes. A PE occurs when a blood clot, usually from your legs or pelvis, busts loose and travels north only to get stuck in your lungs, obstructing blood flow and oxygen transport. If the clot is large enough, it may block the blood flow through your lungs. That may really shorten your racing season as it may be your last day.

Endurance athletes have expanded blood volumes and slow resting heart rates. This is part of the physiological adaptation that allows the massive increases in oxygen delivery to your muscles that allows you to train and race. You can increase your cardiac output to several

times the maximum that an untrained individual can sustain. We do this for hours and even call it fun. However, when we get on a plane, and sit in our seats, we then have slower blood flow velocities in our veins, and even if we are not returning from a race may have an increased risk of clot formation due to this by-product of our good health.

Photos

A big thanks to Dan Hicok who provided most of the action photos for this issue.

After racing, especially if we race long and hard (i.e. long or ultradistance), our risk of clotting is increased by the blood vessel and muscle damage and enhanced tendency of the blood to clot caused by the stress of racing. Steve Lehman's story of DVT and PE after winning a national Pursuit championship in the 55-59 age group in 2005 doesn't involve air travel, just a long car trip after racing, but illustrates the hazard. Long trips of any kind after racing pose increased risk. <http://tsvnews.blogspot.com/2005/10/blood-clots-and-endurance-athlete-by.html>



You can educate yourself more about risks of DVT and PE at: www.airhealth.org.

Clearly, the longer your trip, the greater the risk. Also, in the first several days after long, intense competition, endurance athletes may be at increased risk of DVT due to increased tendency of the blood to clot. Some data suggest that the risk is much higher than commonly believed by physicians. Many cases may go undetected. Asymptomatic DVT may go undetected unless the clot breaks loose and becomes a pulmonary embolism. You may think you have just sore muscles from racing, or you may have no symptoms at all.

There is little data to help you decide what to do. We can gain some information from medical practice, where strategies have been developed to help reduce the risks of DVT and PE in medical and surgical patients.



See the following article from New Zealand to open your eyes on this subject: <http://www.dvt-resources.com/> The information is good, but the author is biased toward nutritional supplements. His recommendation about wearing graduated compression hose or socks is probably valid as a preventative strategy, and has been shown in medical tests to have preventative value.

The medical community also recognizes some risk factors unrelated to endurance athletics. Those risks include:

- q Prior episode of DVT or PE
- q Taking birth control pills, especially when combined with smoking

- q Females taking hormone replacement therapy (HRT)
- q Genetic problems associated with increased tendency of the blood to clot
- q Travel during late pregnancy.
- q Some post-surgical patients, especially with total hip replacement (as many as a third or more of these patients may have a post-op clot if untreated. Medical standards dictate that some form of serious blood thinner be used routinely in these total joint replacement patients.)

So, don't get your tri shorts in a tight wad just quite yet as there are some common sense things to do to reduce your risks. As a physician, I became very interested in this subject after suffering a PE from a completely asymptomatic DVT while racing in Sweden in 2004.

I probably developed the DVT during the 14 hours/ two plane flights it took to travel from the USA. My only predisposing factor was that I was an endurance athlete. The PE was accompanied by acute localized chest pain, marked shortness of breath, coughing up bright red blood, increased heart rate, and a dramatic drop in exercise performance that persisted for hours. My research suggests the following things can be done to reduce your risks of this very bad complication of simply being healthy.

Common sense DVT and PE risk reduction strategies while traveling:

- q **Avoid dehydration:** The adage to drink plenty of water may be misplaced as at least one study suggests that water drinkers in planes actually have an increased tendency toward clotting compared with those drinking an electrolyte replacement drink. (this one reinforces my biases - water is best poured over one's head for its cooling effect. Your electrolyte replacement beverage is now for drinking while training, racing AND traveling).
- q **Move about often while travelling:** Walk about your plane or train periodically. If you are driving, get out once an hour and walk about for several minutes. Exercise your legs in place while seated at least once an hour.
- q **Get an aisle seat:** In one of the articles referenced below, there was no incidence of DVT in any subjects sitting in an aisle seat.
- q **Consider graduated low leg compression socks:** Some professional sports teams regularly use these during travel. This is especially important if your journey lasts longer than 2-3 hours.

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☞ **Think about low risk blood thinners if you have no risk factors:** There are a number of ways to reduce platelet adhesiveness including red wine, aspirin, niacin, and tea. If none of these bother your stomach, the risk factors of using one or more is negligible. Note that these strategies do not necessarily reduce DVT or PE in high risk individuals.

☞ **Take medical blood thinners when traveling if you have risk factors:** As an athlete setting out to perform an inherently hazardous activity by practicing or competing in a triathlon or road race, you cannot afford to have really thin blood while competing or training. A minor accident while your blood is thinned by drugs could turn into a disaster for you as your blood would not clot normally. Thus, your only real choice of a real blood thinner is heparin. This drug has a short enough half-life (the time it takes to clear out of your system) that you can take it in the morning on your travel day and be free of it the day after.

☞ **Take medical blood thinners if you are traveling and have NO risk factors:** Here I may be a medical outlaw, as many physicians would not support this policy. The real medical controversy is whether or not blood thinners are indicated if your only risk factor is that you're traveling to a race or traveling home the day after your long distance race.

Endurance athletes haven't been studied as a group to look at the risks of DVT and PE in travel. However, the evidence makes a good argument that the risk is very real and it's something you should think about. Your post-competition increase in risk is even higher but probably abates after several days, so tacking on three or four vacation days at the end of a big race probably has some health benefits that aren't immediately apparent.

I personally take heparin on trips longer than 2+ hours and drive seat mates and plane crews crazy with how much I move around the plane and how often I want to stop the car and walk around, since I try to get out of the car and walk around for 5 minutes every hour when driving. Trains are easy due to the amount of space in the aisles for walking about.

See the link below for a study looking at the positive value of one dose of heparin prior to long air travel. Note that other studies have found blood clots on much shorter flights:



<http://cat.inist.fr/?aModele=afficheN&cpsid=13>

[488798](#)

If you, the reader, get your chamois in a knot about the idea of injecting yourself with a syringe before each trip, trust me - it is easy. As a lifelong needle-phobic red blooded American male, even I have no problem with modern syringes made for insulin use. The needle is microscopic, and absolutely doesn't hurt! I figured that if I could do an ultra distance race, I could get up the nerve to inject myself. After the first time when I nearly passed out, I thought....."Whew what a fool I am, I didn't even feel that!"

It is a no-sweat deal now, and I know I'll have a better chance of being "the last man standing," as Jimmy Buffett's song says, when I am continuing to race years from now. I figure if I can just live long enough, I may win a few races in the 90-94 age group!



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Who in the World is Al Delaney?

TNL: Have you always been active/an athlete? When and why did you get involved in triathlon?

AD: I've been an active outdoors person since childhood, began running in college, and took up triathlon on a bet from an old triathlete friend in 1997. I guess the reason for triathlon was just the testosterone of the moment. At the time, Mary and I were involved in relay-style adventure racing in the Pacific Northwest.

TNL: Do you participate in any other sports?

AD: I'm also an avid skier, scuba diver, paddler and sailor. It is not exactly a sport, but I enjoy cooking about as much as triathlon.

TNL: You are almost ready to age up to the 60-64 age group. What advice do you have for the

younger triathletes who want to be racing when they are your age?

AD: First, don't train too much. Take some active rest down time each year. The only old triathletes that have raced for years are those that train and race smartly and efficiently. Your knees and other joints are like 80,000 mile tires. They will only tolerate just so much wear and tear, so use them wisely.

Second, remember that most of us, including me, train and race as a fun lifestyle. We're not getting paid to do this, so it has to stay fun.



TNL: What distance race is your favorite and why? Are there any races that you really enjoyed (we use that word loosely) and any that you would NOT do again?

AD: I am transitioning from a primary interest in Olympic distance racing to 1/2 IM distances as a favorite. Those distances are interesting since I'm not particularly fast in any of the three sports, but as the day lengthens, I can often race smarter than others. I have often beaten other guys that, based on past performances, I shouldn't have, unless they had had a second flat tire on the bike. I also prefer hot race venues with complex, difficult courses for the same reason.

My favorite 1/2 IM distance race is St. Croix. I'm signing up for the '08 race (my third time.) St Croix is a thinking man's race. You can't beat that course into submission, as an old guy, no matter how strong you think you are. The race doesn't really start until after "The Beast" (note that I walked the last half of that hill and won my age group and a Kona slot on a very hot windy day in 2004.)

My least favorite race in this area is Reston, due to the attitudes of the folks that own and run the race. Run differently, it has always had the potential of being a great, classic East Coast Olympic race. I've won and placed there multiple times, but the organizers "disappeared" almost all my results from their archives after I wrote a constructively critical appraisal of the race, at their invitation.

TNL: How do you choose your races?

AD: I don't.... I just follow my younger, better-looking, and more successful wife from race to race. She is such an animal that it is fun to tag along. I may serve a useful function, however, as a run coach and bike valet.



TNL: What do you do when you aren't racing?

AD: On the side, I am a physician and engineer with training in health systems research. I returned to the DC area in 1999 to help a local orthopedic business build and run surgery centers, which I did for 7 ½ years until I retired from that business in Nov 2006.

My best friend, Mary, my wife and I generally enjoy a very active lifestyle. We are avid cooks, and enjoy finding good, inexpensive wines. We ski often, several months per year, and increasingly, we can often be found just riding around some part of the world on our bikes.

Four years ago, I became interested in coaching older athletes and injured athletes. We started a business, Rehab to Racing, to do just that, and have spent a lot of time exploring the differences between the 30-year-old, to whom most all articles and books are directed, and the 50+ athlete. Mary and I are especially interested in helping older athletes maintain very high activity levels.

We became USAT certified Level 1 coaches three years ago as part of our strategy to reinvent ourselves and apply our collective 60+ years of medical experience to injured athletes.

TNL: You seem to do a good job of balancing triathlon and the rest of your life. Got any advice there?

AD: Any time I get too serious, I try to remember that I am involved in triathlon as recreation. Triathlon training is a big part of our lifestyle, but I occasionally need to remind myself that I'm out there for fun!

I've been very fortunate to be successful as a student and professional. However, I've won more awards and been more successful as an amateur triathlete in the last 10 years, than I have in anything else that I have ever tried to do in my life. I've had a number of injuries lately, and it is abundantly clear some days that my knees, with their multiple surgeries, have a definite and probably short bit of life left in them. I've gotten comfortable lately with being happy just to be healthy enough to get out there. So it doesn't matter at this point if I never win again, as long as I'm out there in some way. Besides, when we get outside running, swimming, or riding with one of our clients, who we have helped through their medical problem or injury, some days that's better than another podium spot.

TNL: Do you have any pre-race superstitions or rituals?

AD: Absolutely! I hate the anxiety that I've fought for over a decade about getting in the water for a swim start with up to 2000 of my closest friends, most of whom I've never met before. I usually chew up a whole can or two of Altoids in the two hours before the race starts. If I lost my can of Altoids, I probably would DNS the swim start. Oddly enough, I have been swimming for 55+ years, and actually became a swim instructor for the ARC in 1965 and taught swimming and life saving for 5 years, but I still have that anxiety about group swim starts. And, it is only swimming, for I can line up for a World qualifier in duathlon, and will practically fall asleep in the pre-start corral from boredom until the gun goes off. If I ever stop doing triathlons, my fear of mass swim starts will probably be the reason.

TNL: Tell our readers something that will surprise them about you.

AD: I'm a polio survivor, which I had at age 6. I had a very mild case, and was in the hospital less than two months. I probably lost enough muscle units around my hips that I'll never be a really strong biker. This has, for years, been my major secret reason I'm just thankful for every day I can get outside and do practically any type of vigorous physical activity, especially skiing, running and cycling.

This interview was done by Al's wife Mary.

Nutrition Guide

Our new sponsor **Hammer Nutrition** have an excellent guide to optimizing your nutrition during training and races. It can be downloaded from:

<http://www.hammernutrition.com/downloads/fuelinghandbook.pdf>

Du, or Du Not. There is No Tri.

Mark Mullen
cyclekiwi@yahoo.com

I coulda been a contenda

The sport of duathlon is perpetually in the position of Norma Desmond in Billy Wilder's classic *Sunset Boulevard*, waxing nostalgic about past glories and telling anyone who will listen that it used to be big, big I tell you! Yet duathlon was big in the 1980s, with national sponsors and events drawing thousands of competitors.

That, of course, was before the highly successful marketing of Ironman races in particular and triathlon in general; body-punishing trinities just seem to be more sexy, somehow. Accordingly, duathlons in recent years have typically attracted relatively small numbers of competitors when compared with triathlons and many events have been cancelled as a result. Therefore it was great to see the Columbia Triathlon Association, after having cancelled their two short-course duathlons last year, resurrect the Blackwater Traverse and turn it into a long-course event, and, at the behest of USAT, offer it as a qualifier for a chance to represent the US in the World Long Course Duathlon Championships to be held in Richmond in October. The distances—12K run, 73K bike, 8K run—and the location and timing (the Eastern Shore at the beginning of July) promised that this event would be a real challenge.

It was a dark and stormy night ...

... well, OK, actually, it was a hot and humid morning. As we drove to the race start at the Cambridge South Dorchester High School the fog in places reduced visibility to near zero, and the mist was still dense in the open fields around the starting line. The school gym and showers had been open all night for those camping in the parking lot and it was a luxury to be able to use a real bathroom before the race.

Organization by Rob Vigorito was, as usual, impeccable, with lots of thoughtful small touches. The number of registered participants

was small, about 250, and of those about 180 turned up to race (with roughly a two to one ratio of men to women). This meant that bikes were racked only 6 to a bar, with each slot identified not just by number but by name. Several people commented on the low-key and friendly atmosphere, particularly unusual for a qualifier. One nice touch was that Vig made a point of honoring the two most senior competitors, Sharon Roggenbuck and Odd Sangesland (69 and 78 years young respectively). The previous day, at the pre-race meeting, both had been presented with luggage and on the race morning both received another valuable gift: a half hour headstart.



Race director Rob Vigorito talks with Odd Sangesland (78 years old) and Sharon Roggenbuck (69) prior to the start of the race

As we lined up for the race start the fog had almost burned off, but the air was densely liquid; it seemed as if we might as well be swimming after all. The ambient temperature was in the high 70s but the humidity had already pushed the heat index into the 80s. My fellow competitors were all tanned, trim and toned, each a veritable Adonis—and that was just the over-40s. Mercifully I was spared the sight of all the pros and spring chickens, as they had departed promptly at 7am. Ahead of us the women awaited their 7.05 start, each of them seemingly with 0% body fat and hamstrings as big as my quads. There was no doubt about it, I was in the wrong event.

And then Vig blew the starting horn with his characteristic gusto.

We're not in Kansas anymore ... wait, maybe we are.

I was aiming for somewhere around an 8.30 pace for the first 8 mile run, and I started off a little fast with an 8 minute first mile, but nothing too stressful I thought ... until I glanced at watch and saw that my HR was well into zone 5. I knew I wouldn't be able to keep going at that intensity for long, so I backed off a bit. However, as my pace dropped over the next mile to more than nine minutes, my HR only barely dipped below the zone 5 threshold and

continued to hover there throughout the run even as my pace dropped, and dropped, and dropped ... I held on to a pace slightly above 9 minutes for the next couple of miles, but by mile three I had been passed by just about everyone. At that point I threw all my goals for the race out the window and knew that this one would be simply about surviving. I was already completely drenched, and the rapidly receding backs of the racers in front of me glowed wetly in the slanted light.



As we approached the turnaround I was running pretty much by myself ... except for the guy I could hear about a hundred metres behind me emitting anguished groans every few seconds. The course was almost completely flat, with acres of corn on either side of the road stretching into the hazy distance. I had plenty of time to contemplate that corn as my pace dropped over the miles. 9.19: genetically modified corn: boon to mankind or unnatural evil? 9.30: I wonder what corn futures are listing at today? 9.46: What are the most famous paintings of corn?

Just after the turnaround I heard footsteps coming up behind me, and soon a guy drew up beside me. "You look like you could run all day," he said to me, "You have such a beautiful form." It was the nicest thing anyone has ever said to me in a race, and I was still feeling all warm and fuzzy as my fellow runner pulled ahead of me and receded into the distance—but not before I saw the "74" stenciled on his calf.

Apart from feeling as if I was melting, I wasn't feeling too bad muscle-wise, and I made sure to

thank all the volunteers that I passed. I passed the aid station located at what would be turnaround for the second run and remember calling out "There's a good chance I'm going to be completely buggered on the second run so I'll thank you all now for being out here."

As we approached the finish I began to pass a couple of the women from the wave in front of me. I set up the transition pretty well, hat and belt off before I ran in, peeling off shoes and putting my helmet on simultaneously, getting my bike shoes on quickly. I was congratulating myself on having done a good job ... at which point I realized I was trying to run out the run entrance rather than the bike exit. I'm usually pretty good with these details, so the run had rattled me more than I thought. Once I got myself pointed in the right direction I passed several people in the chute (people who hadn't been visible in front of me on the run, therefore I guessed I'd picked up a couple of places), mounted the bike smoothly and accelerated out onto the bike course.



The good thing about starting the bike leg near the back of the pack is that everyone is your rabbit

The Long and Not Very Winding Road

I was ready to fly but my body clearly wasn't, since my heart rate was now in the middle of zone 5. So I downshifted a couple of gears and concentrated on keeping my cadence high and breathing steadily and fully as I tried to reoxygenate my system. After the first five miles I'd got my HR down to the high zone three and I upped the pace.

The bike course was two loops of long, largely flat, and relatively smooth roads. As I raced along, I began to come across the unmistakable evidence of a race in progress: discarded gel packets, launched water bottles, small plastic supplement bottles, a crumpled cardboard Miller Lite sixpack ... I was 8 miles into the ride when I was lapped by the leaders

The small number of competitors, the loop structure, and the fact that I was so far behind everyone after the run all contributed to make this the most solitary experience I've ever had in

a multisport race. Bikes would loom up in the distance, I would inch toward them, and then slingshot past them. An early highlight of the ride for me came about two thirds of the way through the first loop, when I passed in quick succession two guys from my age group, assuring myself, as the rumble of their carbon wheels faded into the distance, that at least I wouldn't be last in my age group.



Especially when I'm out on my own on the bike, the experience of riding is a densely aural one for me: the solid blast of the air flowing over you and the bike at high speed, the sound of rubber on pavement shifting from snarl to hum to whine with the changing surface. At about the mid-point of the loop we crossed a patch of desolately beautiful wetland on causeway that climbed almost imperceptibly to a small bridge. A young couple were fishing off the side, and I wondered what they made of the stream of bikes passing them at high speed. As I hit the bridge I caught the sound of my drivetrain reflected off the steel guardrails and I felt a moment of pure exhilaration in the almost inaudible contented purr of a well-tuned bike.

But while my bike might have been happy, I wasn't. By the start of the second loop I was beginning to hurt, and hurt in places where I didn't even know I had places. I was keeping myself well fueled (I expected to do the ride in a little over two hours, and I consumed as much Perpetuum as I'd usually take for a three hour ride, plus regularly consuming E-caps to keep my electrolytes up), stretching regularly, but I knew I was riding (for me) fast, and the pace was beginning to tell. As each new pain

appeared I began to talk myself through it. "It's just your body lying to you, it's not really that bad" or "This just proves your body is working hard" or "This is nothing unexpected, you knew this would be hard, this is all perfectly normal" and gradually the pain would subside. My legs began to feel as if they belonged to someone else entirely, spinning furiously, in an oddly disembodied fashion below me; I was stationary and the road was simply unrolling beneath me. Willpower has its limits, however, and over the last five miles of the ride I was in pretty much constant pain, and my pace began to fall away.

Nevertheless, I was able to get off the bike in reasonably good order; I could hear my partner Mary shouting encouragement to me, as she had done at the first transition and the end of the first loop (it was a pretty good course for spectators). Despite cocking up T2 as well by trying to run the bike in the run exit, my second transition was faster than the first, and I headed out on to the run course ...

Is this Kambridge or Kona?

... and into hell. Oddly enough, I experienced absolutely no discomfort as I began running which should have clued me in that something was wrong. My cadence was good and I picked up at almost my average pace from the first run. As I reached the end of the school's exit road and turned on to the out and back course up Egypt road I saw a sight I won't soon forget. Coming back down the road was a long line of athletes, all those who had receded into the distance on the first run ... and fully half of them were walking, with most of the rest shambling along in an exhausted remnant of what might have once been a run. While the humidity had dropped substantially it was still high enough to push the heat index close to 100 and the air felt like a blast furnace.

My first mile went by in 9.27 and then at mile 1.5 something happened to me that has never happened to me in any race, ever.

I started walking.

At first I wasn't even aware that that was what I was doing; a part of my brain was convinced that I was still running. But my body had just stopped of its own accord. I couldn't really process what was happening to me. I managed to start running again after walking for about a hundred metres, made the next aid station and then stopped to drink water and pour ice over myself. In both directions people were shoving ice into hats, down the front of their shorts (I didn't want to know), wedging it into their cleavage (usually only the women were doing this) ... and then, by and large, resuming the walk. It was then that I remembered a comment I'd overheard before the pre-race meeting the day before. "Just wait and see,"

one athlete had told another, "It's going to turn into a death march out there tomorrow."

My second mile had been walked/run through in 10.26. For a while I ran with a young woman who was clearly faster than me but would stop every 100 metres and walk. Every time she stopped she sounded bad, really bad, gasping and spluttering. I eventually left her behind simply because I kept running, albeit slowly. I decided that I was going to try and keep running between aid stations and stop at each station.

That resolve lasted until just after the turnaround at mile 2.3, when I stopped abruptly, sure that I was going to toss my cookies spectacularly. At last, I told myself as my stomach turned over, I'm going to be a real athlete! But the nausea passed, and I was able to keep running to the next aid station. Mile 3: 11.46. Runners were trying to offer support and encouragement to one another, especially to those people still on the outbound leg. Sometimes the encouragement was offered in an exhausted whisper, sometimes it was merely in the form of a hand gesture or an attempt at a smile. Some of the outbound athletes attempted to respond, but quite a few only gargled inarticulately. Everyone looked really, really ill.

But then something strange happened. I began to feel better. Whatever it was in my body that needed to recover seemed to have done so and I was able to keep a consistent pace, passing a few people, to the aid station near mile 4 (11.14). Here I stopped to drink and ice, and found myself standing next to a tall guy in his 30s, wearing a bright pink T-Mobile bike jersey. I'd seen him walking as I'd run (after a manner of speaking) the outbound leg. We stood there for a moment, both of us dissolving in the heat. "Jesus Fucking Christ" I remember saying. "Amen to that" he said. Then, our moment of worship over, he crumpled his cup, and announced, "OK, time to go" and off he went.

He was running at a good clip and was soon about 50 metres ahead of me. I began to chase him. I had to. He was younger than me. And I hate pink. So I picked it up. Twenty, even ten minutes earlier you would not have convinced me that I would have had anything left to pick up the pace at the end. But I really felt all my track work beginning to pay off here.

I passed Mr. T-Mobile at the entrance road, and then, my pace still increasing, a couple of people ahead of him. Then, less than four hundred metres from the finish, I passed 69 year old Sharon Roggenbuck still running, and conversing animatedly with the runner next to her (what an inspiration that woman is). I was concentrating on trying to hold my form together. In fact, I remember running with my head turned sideways, not allowing myself to look at the finish line, not wanting to believe it was actually

there, or maybe afraid that it would prove to be some kind of heat-induced hallucination. Finally, as I rounded the final turn, I looked squarely at the line, and focused on running through it, toward Mary who was standing there waiting with the camera. As I crossed the line I felt great. Until my legs buckled under me.



Let's just say that while this pretty much sums up the race, it won't be making my highlight reel!

The next thing I knew I was sitting down in the shade of the finishing tent, along with several other athletes and people were shoving ice packs down my back and I had a cup of ice water in one hand and Gatorade in the other. After several minutes of gradually taking in fluids I felt steady enough to head off to the cool of the school gym. I later found out I had run the final mile in 8.51.

As I approached the gym I saw people coming out with slices of pizza and cans of soda. By the time I got inside, all that remained were a few lousy bagels. Since the first athletes had finished nearly an hour and a half before (the first male finisher, Jason Spong, finished in 2:43:39, the first female finisher, Kristine Kuss, in 3:19:30) I'm guessing that they and their supporters had already cleaned the place out. It didn't bother me that much, since it was about an hour before I could contemplate any food that wasn't in liquid form, but I felt sorry for the 50 or so people finishing behind me.

The Gory Details
Run 1 (12k): 1:08:17 (9.09). Age group:
22/23; Overall: 124/132M

Bike (43.5 miles): 2:05:17 (20.8mph). 13/23;
91/132M
Run 2 (8k): 51:50 (10.26). 18/23; 90/132M

Final Time: 4:08:15. Age group: 16/23;
Overall: 98/132M

If I decide to do something like this again ...
... somebody needs to slap me. Hard.

For me this event started off as sheer, unadulterated torture, and then went downhill from there. However it also gave me a huge sense of accomplishment at having survived it. It also helped to give me a better appreciation for a couple of the key elements of multisport events which, taken together, form something of a paradox.

First, unless you are an elite athlete (and maybe even then?), when you tackle a multisport event it is primarily about the sometimes vicious competition you wage against yourself. It is about overcoming what the course and conditions do to you, and, not infrequently, what you do to yourself. The individual drama of multisport competition derives, for most of us, not from the perfectly executed race plan, but from how you respond when things go pear-shaped, the degree to which you can will yourself to keep going when every sane component of your brain is telling you not to be so bloody stupid, from your ability to keep your body moving when the conditions are more extreme even than you expected.

At the same time, however, multisport is a collective experience. It was completely obvious to me that I wasn't the only one suffering out there. In fact, when I looked at the results after the race I was staggered to see that many people who had run the first run segment with a pace somewhere in the six minute range, saw that pace drop in the second, shorter run by two, three, even four minutes per mile. Suddenly, my having run a minute per mile slower than my first run didn't seem quite so bad.

I can't speak for what it was like at the front of the pack. In fact, that's something I accept that I will never know (unless I am still competing in my 70s, like Odd Sangesland, and have managed to outlive most of my major competition). But at the back of the pack there was definitely the feeling that we were all in this together, and while USAT has strict rules against competitors offering one another physical assistance, for me the constant encouragement (and the lift I received from encouraging someone else, or even from just being nice to the volunteers) was sometimes as good a gel hit.

Anyone who believes that duathlon is inherently multisport lite might want to give the Blackwater Traverse a go if it is offered again next year.



Ten Reasons to Try a Duathlon

Mark Mullen
cyclekiwi@yahoo.com

Done every tri in the region? Done most of them twice? Looking for a different kind of athletic challenge? Consider including a duathlon or two in your race plans for next year.

1. There is no swimming involved. Many athletes I have met express a profound horror of having to run twice for God's sake, instead of having to swim once. But you only have to take one look at the Eagleman competitors clambering out of the Choptank, faces black with toxic sludge, and running a second time starts to seem like an eminently sane option.

2. Take Back Your Life. As we all know, multisport training is time consuming. Duathlons allow you to push yourself and experience the challenge of bridging different competitive disciplines ... but you only have to train two sports instead of three. Bike training, as we all know, is fun. Run training is fun. Oddly enough, however, I've yet to meet anyone who tells me they enjoy swim training ... So if you are looking forward to spending more time with your family (genuinely looking forward to doing so, and not simply because you've been caught with your snout in the political trough) or wondering what it would be like to have a life outside training, do the Du.

3. Experience a more relaxed style of competition. Duathlons are typically smaller-scale events (even when they are coupled with a tri), and as such have a more relaxed feel to them. Athletes who specialize in duathlons are well aware that they constitute a rather oddball minority in the multisport community, so there is a degree of camaraderie often evident at events. In every race I've been in, competitors routinely compliment, encourage and motivate one another, often going out of their way to do so if they see another athlete flagging.

4. Experience a more intense style of competition. Duathletes race sprint duathlons in particular at a very high level of intensity, with an effort more typical of an extended time trial. Arguably the intensity is even greater than sprint tris. With no neoprene to shed, both transitions tend to be brutally fast, and without the swim heaviness in your legs, you hit the bike leg with an elevated HR and your legs fully warmed up.

5. There is no swimming involved. Let's face it, most of America's bodies of swimmable water are by now polluted messes, however idyllic they may look on the surface. As a result, duathletes save a small fortune on visits to the ear, nose, and throat specialist. So if you don't like wondering whether that object you just glimpsed beneath the water's surface was a giant Kielbasa or something worse, give duathlon a try.

6. Experience new bodily sensations. And I mean that in a good way! Triathletes are familiar with that distinctive feeling of the transition from bike to run, the heaviness in your legs, the sensation as if you are moving in slow motion. You still get that, obviously, in duathlons. So don't worry, the suffering is not lessened. But you also get something else. In every duathlon in which I've competed, the transition from run to bike is almost the inverse feeling. You get this indescribable feeling of suddenly flying, of having been released from your earthly bondage and at last being able to move as fleet and fine as nature intended. Don't believe me? You'll just have to give it a try, then.

7. Level Up! Long course duathlons, although they are few and far between, can be a useful bridge between Olympic distance tris and longer distance events, such as a half Ironman. While long course distances tend to vary, the Powerman series (currently raced in Alabama, Ohio, and (intermittently) in North Carolina) typically feature two 8K runs and a 35 mile bike ride. The Powerman series, at least, also seems to favor hilly bike courses, increasing the challenge level.

8. You can never do too many bricks. In most parts of the country (with the exception of the South where, inexplicably given the temperatures involved, they race duathlons all

summer long) duathlons tend to be confined to the spring and fall (most major sprint duathlons in the mid-Atlantic region are over by the beginning of May, and don't begin again until late August). Duathlons are, then, excellent preparation for triathletes contemplating races in the Summer. At the other end of the year, they are a fun way to begin to wind down your competitive season without going completely cold turkey.

9. So what is it that you do again? Because they tend to be smaller scale, more intimate and (often) more spectator friendly, duathlons can be an excellent way to introduce bemused loved ones—or, just as important, people who are contemplating becoming involved in the multisport lifestyle—to the sport. Events like Columbia are wonderful spectacles, but they are often a little overwhelming and it is often very hard for spectators to get round the course and see their athlete in action. With duathlons, spectators typically can get a good view of each and every athlete in the transition area, and move around the start/finish area very easily.

10. There is no swimming involved. The swim leg in triathlon is an odd concession to a completely different kind of sporting tradition. It is the moment at which a sport which is supposed to be about isolated, individual effort, suddenly and inexplicably becomes a fully body contact sport. So if you would rather watch World Extreme Cage Fighting than experience it, head on over to duathlon.com and start planning a less confrontational season.



Make Your Bike Happy

Bob Shaver
shavermultisport@cox.net

Bike Maintenance. "Oh, yeah. Ummm, I'll get to that tomorrow, I gotta go run/swim/ride/stretch/eat/sleep/get teeth pulled." Or perhaps "I'll take it to my bike shop next month for its yearly tune-up."

This is the dirty (sometimes literally) little Triathlon task that almost always gets short shrift. But, a clean bike, a well maintained bike is a happy bike. One that is less likely to leave you stranded at the side of the road like a discarded gel wrapper (that obviously somebody ELSE threw there because you would NEVER litter like that, right? RIGHT?). Just think - a bike that is crisp shifting, quick braking, silent (no chain noise), all the time. What a pleasure to ride!



Here is my weekly, ummm bi-weekly...OK, usually at least monthly routine. It is also my "day before a race" routine. It is a comforting routine that helps focus me mentally and I feel good knowing my bike is ready to go. The entire routine can be done in about 15 minutes with practice.

- q If you are going to wash your bike, do that first, then do the following.
- q Check your tires. Look for small cuts or worn spots on the tread and on the sidewalls. If you have clinchers, make sure

that the bead is evenly seated all the way around the rim.

- q Clean the braking surfaces on your rims (rubbing alcohol works great, assuming you have non-exotic rims). You'd be amazed at the grime that comes off (and how much better your brakes work)
- q Clean your brake pads and check for grit stuck to the pad surfaces. Also check how worn they are. There should be vertical, or sideways "V" shaped grooves in the pads to redirect water. If the grooves are gone or very shallow (< 1/8 inch) get new pads.
- q Clean & lube your chain. Which lube to use (and how to clean the chain) can get into almost religious debates, but almost any cleaning and almost any lube is better than nothing. Don't use 3-in-1 oil (or any other vegetable based oil). If you don't already have a chain cleaner device there are several models to choose from at any local bike shop. You can even get a set of chain cleaner device, cleaner liquid, lube (sometimes) or additional cleaning brushes.

With some of the newer, thinner chain lubes (Teflon based like Finish Line or "high tech molecular bonding" ones like ProLink) you can get away with NOT cleaning your chain first as the lubes tend to flush the gunk out of the chain (unless you just rode through the mud). Just make sure to wipe the chain down thoroughly afterwards to take of the dirt & grit.

To lube your chain, shift into the smallest cog in back and the largest chain ring in front. Rotate the pedals backwards slowly and place a drop of lube on each link as it passes over the rear cog. After one complete pass over the chain, stop applying lube and continue to rotate the pedals (slowly) for a couple of minutes to help work the lube into the bushings & rollers. Then repeat.

Finally, wipe all (yes ALL) of the excess lube and gunk off the chain. You cannot wipe off too much! The only lube that does any good is that which made it in-between the moving metal parts. Any left on the outside of the chain only attracts dirt and makes chain ring tattoos on your calf.

- q Clean the gunk off of your chain rings and rear cluster, and from between the gears in the rear cluster. A quick and partial job can be done with just an old rag if you don't have a cog brush (a narrow brush with long stiff bristles). Wipe off the front gears, then grab the rag stretched between both hands and work the edge of the rag between each pair of gears on the rear and work it back and forth (spinning the gear cluster as you go). This will wipe out most of the grime.

- q Lube the pivot points on your front and rear derailleur. Just a drop (or short squirt) of lube is sufficient, then work the shifter through all gears.
- q Are your brakes adjusted? And centered on the wheel? There should be a small gap (less than 1/8 inch) between the pads and the rims and the wheel should be centered between the pads. There should be barrel adjusters where the brake cable comes into the calipers. You can rotate this to move the pads closer to or further from the wheel.
- q Is your shifting crisp and clean, and noise-free (i.e. no chain rattle from the rear cluster or chain rub on the front derailleur)? A rattle from the rear in 1 or more gears can mean that the rear derailleur is out of adjustment (brake and shifter cables stretch over time). There should be a barrel adjuster either where the shift cable enters the derailleur or on the down tube where the shift cable goes through the first braze-on (cable stop). Turn the barrels adjusters in 1/4 or 1/2 turn increments until the noise goes away and/or your shifts are nice and crisp.

IMPORTANT: Count the number of turns you make in each direction. This way you can return to the original position if you end up with a worse setting than you had originally.

- q Check all of the bolts on your bike (seat tube, handlebar, bottle cages) and any screws in your pedals to make sure they are all snug. Beware of over tightening bottle cage bolts (you can pull the nut out of the frame) or any bolt on a carbon or Ti frame (you can crack the frame).

Race Report: Ironman Coeur D'Alene

Andie Nelson
andreaemshoff@yahoo.com

After successfully completing Ironman Florida in 2005 and 2006, I felt that it was time to challenge myself a bit and move off of the flat-as-a-pancake course and try a new race. I selected Ironman Coeur d'Alene, based predominantly on its reputation for beautiful scenery. I would be remiss, however, if I did not mention my severe lack of confidence with my cycling abilities; admittedly, I also chose Coeur d'Alene based on a not-so-scientific analysis of the North America Sports "interactive bike course elevation chart". In comparison to other races, the undulations I'd face on this course looked in my mind rather peaceful—perhaps

similar to a resting cardiac monitor? I took a big, deep breath and secured my entry.

There is a funny thing about signing up for a race a full year in advance. On the one hand, a year gives you loads of time to visualize the race, train, refine (or in my case, learn) technique. A year also provides plenty of time for procrastination—after all, the race isn't for 10/8/6 months...so there's no problem if I don't go to the pool tonight. Finally, a year allows plenty of time for other things in life to become the priority.



In the case of refining technique, I vowed to learn to ride Zippy (my bike) more efficiently, so I signed up for Eric Sorensen's indoor cycling class. His class was a real wakeup call—the first time we did one-legged drills, I could not make a complete circle. At all. Apparently, I had completed two Ironman races by pounding down on my pedals like a seven year old on a banana-seat bike. Thanks to Eric and others in my class, I came out of the winter "offseason" feeling a lot stronger than I have in previous years.

In the case of procrastination, I like to think that I managed to get out there plenty of times when I would have preferred to remain sleeping/warm/dry but the fact of the matter is, I was in the pool once in the two months leading up to the race. This is not good. My bike and run training were fairly solid for most of my training, but in the 3 weeks leading up to the race, I rode my bike once.

As for shifting of priorities...I got engaged two months after signing up for IMCDA. Based on venue availability, our wedding date was set for two weeks before the race. While I would not recommend this schedule, the two events did balance each other out, somewhat. When I was getting crazed about wedding stuff, I went for a long bike ride. When I needed muscle recovery time, I did wedding planning. It was not optimal, though...

The race ended up being a really big test for me—a test of whether I could, in fact handle hills on the bike, and a test of how little training I could do and actually complete an Ironman.

I arrived in Spokane late at night—even with summer solstice, it was dark. I drove to the hotel, and crashed. First thing in the morning, I walked outside and was just blown away by how gorgeous it is in that part of the country. The sky looks enormous out there, and everything is blue and green. Amazing! I arrived at the expo and the scene was like summer camp for very fit adults...people running on the beach, swimming in the lake, friendly volunteers everywhere—I give the folks of Coeur d'Alene major props for how welcoming they are to the Ironman community. They were genuinely excited to have us there, and not once did I hear grumblings about road closings or how many crazy body-shaving athletes had suddenly invaded their tranquil existence. Oh, and the food there—Amazing.

I got to transition in full daylight on race morning, courtesy of summer solstice...temperatures were going to be perfect—low 70's all day. The lake, however, was a different story. The water had gotten so choppy that the race directors elected to allow those who wished to skip the swim and do a duathlon, to do so. The swim was definitely rough, but I always enjoy the swim the most, and this race was no different. As we rounded the first buoy, everyone popped their heads up to float around it and avoid the "washing machine" effect. A few guys around me started barking like seals...a perfect tribute to the situation. I joined them.

I made it out of the water in 1:17, and hopped on my bike. It was chilly, and my arms were grateful for the stop we'd made in the men's athletic sock aisle at Walmart the night before. I was feeling very strong on the bike until about mile 25, when the race director's welcome dinner comment, "we've changed the bike course a bit" rang sardonically in my ears. By mile 31, I was wondering if I could make it to 40. Everyone was passing me, but I kept telling myself that I had an extra hour on the bike because I made the swim cutoff with an hour to spare. I focused on the scenery, on eliminating "dead spots" in my pedal stroke like Eric taught us, and kept on eating. By mile 50, the hills had mostly subsided and we were headed back to town to begin the second loop. The 20 miles of

relative flat revived me before we started the climbing again, and I again began to enjoy myself more. This was the first race that I've done with my tail on my bike, and the comments I received from my fellow Ironmen really kept me going. "Hey, love that tail"...or "I think you ran over Tigger!"...or "Nice Tail" (if I was feeling good, I'd respond to this one with "thanks—which one??")

Midway through the bike, I saw Liza (or rather, Liza saw me...from behind...as she came blazing past me, looking amazingly strong). I'd gotten a post that she saw the infamous Tail in the Tribike Transport pickup area, and we'd been trying to meet up prior to the race. Mercifully, she did slow down to chat for a little while and then went on to finish her first Ironman in a stellar 13:08.



As I got near the finish of the bike, I began to worry. Having experienced my first-ever full seizure of my leg muscles, twice, during the last 20 miles of the bike, I didn't know whether I'd be able to run at all. I finished the bike in 7:24, and saw my mom near transition who shouted words of encouragement. I told her I never wanted to see my bike again, jumped off and ran it into transition. Wait—I ran it into transition?? I could run!!!

I felt good during the run, but took it slow and steady the whole way for a 4:54 marathon. In retrospect, I wish I'd pushed myself more on the run, but I respect The Marathon and know what Going Out Too Fast has done to me in the

previous marathons, when I have tried this stunt outside of triathlon. The Ironman is in my mind too much of an investment to risk a DNF in order to test a quicker marathon time. Maybe I'll push it in the fall when I do IMFL (again)? The CDA run course was mostly flat, and went along Lake Coeur d'Alene. It was beautiful, and the support was great. I customarily treat the marathon as my victory lap...once I'm off the bike I feel pretty home free and don't have much shame in doing some walking. Heck, I've stopped to watch the sun set during both Ironman Floridas!

Among the more poignant aspects of the triathlon experience is the way in which the progression of three sports gradually connects our fellow competitors. By nature of its duration, this is made all the more palpable during the Ironman.

Prior to the start, everyone is focused within—visualizing the race, finding a quiet spot for solitude...and then the gun goes off. We're a squirming mass of neoprene lemmings, goggled, faceless, fighting to find a spot of unfettered water. On the bike, we gain faces but speed ahead and spread out...sometimes it seems as though nobody else is out there. We can shout words of encouragement, but not much else lest a draft marshal catch us. On the run, we finally meet. On every course, a line of unwavering athletes will snake as far as you can see in both directions. We spot our spouses, our kids, our friends...we are all hurting on some level and we can finally see each other... this is my favorite part of the day...knowing that we will all finish this together.

Finish Time: 13:48

Race Report: Eagleman 70.3 – Two out of Three Ain't Bad

Laura Novak
laura_novak@avalonbay.com

The Friday before Eagleman, I left work a couple hours early and when I walked into my house, my husband greeted me by saying "Wow, you look awful!" While it is not what I wanted to hear, it accurately described how I felt. As if doing a half-ironman wasn't stressful enough, it appeared I would have the further complication of a pre-race fever and sore throat. I slept for twelve hours and while I felt better Saturday morning, I was certainly not at 100 percent.

Saturday mornings are extremely busy for my family with two soccer matches and a baseball game, so fortunately I had no time to worry about how I was feeling. The plan was to watch a little of each game and then meet my brother, who was also competing at Eagleman, around noon so that we could drive to Cambridge together.

Ethan, my 6 year old, had a particular good soccer game and scored two expertly executed goals while I watched. I left the soccer match after the quarter and returned to my house to pack up the car and wait for my brother. Just as we were about to leave, my husband pulled up to the house with the kids. Ethan was visibly excited. It was the final game of the season and as he showed me his special trophy for "Most Valuable Player," I could not help but notice how proud he was of himself. I left the house smiling and thinking less and less about feeling sick.

As we drove to Cambridge my brother, Sean and I talked about the joys of training while balancing a job and a family. We each have three kids, but Sean's youngest is a foster child with multiple and severe medical issues. I have a ton of respect for Sean and his wife as the number of doctor appointments alone would do me in, let alone the day to day caretaking. Yet, Sean seems to understand the value of doing something you love – in moderation and not at the expense of other things and the people you love. It is a great lesson in life balance.

The weather Sunday was perfect for racing - a little overcast, a slight wind, moderate temperatures and minor choppiness in the waters of the Choptank River. If I still felt sick, the prospect of perfect weather was the ideal medicine. With a slight chill in the air, the water felt pleasantly warm. My wave waited several minutes in the water, during which I kept my finger on the "start" button of my watch. As readers of my earlier posts know, I've been known to forget to start my watch at many races, so pushing that button was my singular focus. Once we started swimming, my focus switched to sighting. I am a life long right side breather and the buoys were to the left, but amazingly I swam a relatively straight race. I stuck to my plan to swim at a comfortable pace and finished the first leg within my expected time range.

The bike was easily my favorite part of the race. I think I smiled the entire time. I kept looking at my odometer and I could not believe how fast I was going with what seemed like little effort. Relatively early on during the bike, a woman passed me and said, "Have a great race. Enjoy." I smile a little broader and reflexively responded "You too!" Now, normally when passed, I immediately check out the racer's sex and look to the right calf to check out the age group- I've tried to convince myself that I'm not competitive any more, but I should know better. But this time, someone passed me and made me feel good at the same time with only a couple words of encouragement. So I tried it the next time I passed someone. "Have a great race!" I yelled. "Hey – you too!" was the response. Hmm... another smile. What a great concept – a couple of words and a ton of payback.



A couple hours into the race, some riders were struggling and having difficulty maintaining a straight line. As I came up on these riders – I was sure to yell out “Passing on your left,” in an effort not to get clipped. After shouting out “Passing” to one rider, he responded by saying “Well you might as well... everyone else already seems to be.” Tired and still in good humor! “In that case,” I yelled back, “enjoy the weather and have a good time!” He good naturedly responded, “That’s exactly what I’m doing!”

I wish I could have taken that same attitude on to the run. I finished the bike and I could not believe my split. All I had to do was run 10 minute miles and I was looking at a PR and a sub-six hour race. Heck – I could almost do an 11 minute mile and still be under six hours. I was feeling pretty darn good about myself! But half a mile in and I had cramps in both legs-quads and hamstrings, making stretching an interesting process. I regrouped and reminded myself of the plan which was to maintain a steady pace and walk the water stations. Walking the water stations ensured I was drinking and more importantly gave me something to look forward to. The first mile was really tough, but then the first mile is always hard as the legs adjust from the bike to the run. But it didn’t get any better on the second mile or the third or the fourth. I passed my brother coming the other way between mile 2 and 3. He looked great and I was intensely jealous! Sean went on to best his PR by 23 minutes. I kept running – but I was not meeting my 10 minute

mile mark. I was still on PR target, but just barely.

Finally between mile 10 and 11, I had to walk. I was at the same time, incredibly hungry and intensely nauseous. Another gel was not an option. I was so excited and happy a couple hours earlier and now I was just mad at myself. I started kicking myself for all the things I should have done differently. Perhaps I went too hard on the bike – even though it felt great. I should have had more Gatorade on the bike. Forgetting the Enduralytes in T2 was probably not a good idea either. When I finally crossed the finish line, a volunteer had a sincere look of concern as he escorted me to the Gatorade table. I must have looked as bad as I felt!

So is the glass half empty or half full? Sunday after the race - definitely empty. But upon reflection I'm now leaning towards full. In an odd way the experience actually motivated me more than I think I would have been had I done well. I now know I can rock the bike - I just need to be a smarter racer and continue to work on my running while training. Besides... when I got home after the race, Ethan was still on a high about his “Most Valuable Player” trophy – a high that lifted me as well.



Race Report: MedExpress 70.3

Chris Bennett
chris@lpcb.org

You are here-by banned from using the words "there were"....

I decided that for my first 70.3 triathlon of the year I would participate in the MedExpress Mountaineer Triathlon in Morgantown West Virginia. After my stellar performance in my last 70.3 - I blew up on the run - I figured that I might as well build up my confidence by doing a nice easy race within the hills of West Virginia.

My race crew was expanded from Lis to include Ruan, a young friend of ours from New Zealand who was on his OE ('Overseas Experience'). He had just graduated from the University of Auckland and was on his way to Canada to work for a year. He was with us for a few weeks enjoying the experience of the USA.

We drove up on Friday and started the weekend with a kayak trip on the Monongahela River in Morgantown. This was run by a professor from the University of West Virginia who shared the history of the area as we sedately, and I mean sedately, paddled along the river. Another couple joined us for her birthday celebration and our guide surprised her with Champaign and we sang the NZ birthday song. We paddled past some fisherman on the river and when we asked what their fish tasted like they firmly told us that they wouldn't eat anything from the Monongahela river as it was way too polluted. Great. In two days I was to swim 1.2 miles here.

Saturday was a restful day for me. We went about 50 miles from Morgantown where Lis had arranged for her and Ruan to go white water rafting. I declined to join as I didn't want to run the risk of injuring something by being tossed from the boat. It was also a good excuse just to sit back and relax, reading a good book. Life had been very stressful at work lately. It worked out really well as all three of us had a good time!

In the evening we went into town to collect my race packet and drop off my bike. The transition area was in the ground level of a parking garage. I was surprised to note that there was no formal bike check so it was quite quick to drop off the bike. I noted some serious competitors here, as evidenced by the expensive kit they had! The professionals rack was resplendent with bikes that most triathletes lust over.

We enjoyed dinner at the 'Blue Moose Cafe'. Lis had decided this was ideal for vegetarians-just based on the name. "I know these things ..." was all she said. The problem was that she was right! Great food in an eclectic atmosphere so I

tanked up ready for the next day. Proving what a small world it can be, a week later we found out from a neighbor that his mother lives in Morgantown and supplies dessert to the Cafe.

Sunday morning arrived and it was an ideal day for a long race. The temperature was in the low 60's when we left the hotel for the transition area to set up my gear. I got up earlier than everyone else and inhaled an early breakfast. Lis and Ruan planned to see me off and then eat while I was on the bike leg.

The transition area was completely unsupervised which meant that Lis and Ruan could come in and watch me set up. That was a good thing as I had forgotten a couple of things in the car so they kindly grabbed them for me. The bike area was quite cramped and someone had kindly moved my bike from the choice end position to an inward location on the rack. Very bad form.



After getting my gear laid out we walked over to watch the start. The first wave were the few professionals. The start was from a brand new marina with docks on the river which the pro's ved off to start. The later waves all had water starts which are much more to my liking. It was fun watching the starts from the vantage point of the river bank and to have Lis and Ruan with me.

Eventually it came time for me to suit up and head down to the water. When I jumped in I was pleasantly surprised to find that the water was not cold. In fact, much warmer and it would have been uncomfortable to be in my wet suit! After being bashed and battered in the swim during my NY-Philadelphia triathlon I decided to hang back and not be anywhere near the front.

The horn blew and away we went. In spite of my best intentions, I still got bashed around a bit. We headed down the river to the first buoy, hung a left across the river, followed by another left up the river. Eventually we came to another buoy, turned left, another left and it was homeward bound. Sounds easy - but it isn't when the sun is blinding you and there are a lot of others around you trying to find the shortest line to each buoy!

I was able to get into my swim rhythm fairly quickly: 1-2-3 breathe etc. and had relatively few close encounters of the worst kind with other swimmers. I felt surprisingly good in the water-probably a result of all those 3000+ yard workouts at the DC Haine's Point masters swim club that I had been doing before the race. It sure showed in my time: I took 7 minutes off my previous best time for a 1.2 mile swim.

There was a moderately long run to the transition area lined with supporters which was a nice change from most races. I knew I had a good swim time.

For some reason I really fumbled in the transition to the bike. Normally I'm OK but nothing went right. People came in after me and departed before me. A bad sign. I had even forgotten to take off my cycle shoe cleat covers, but fortunately I realized this before I hopped on the bike! I managed to get myself together and out the door where Lis and Ruan cheered me on. Then it was off on my favorite part of a triathlon. While I was cycling the hills, Lis and Ruan went and gorged themselves on a buffet breakfast at a nearby hotel. They claimed later that they thought of me with my energy bars as they were hoovering up the food, but I somehow doubt it.

The bike course was a two loop leg. We headed out of town across the river, then followed the river for a while, before turning inland up some hard hills. An Olympic distance race was being held at the same time and their bike course overlapped ours. At one point we had to do a sharp turn while they went straight. I passed a fellow after that and noted that he had grass hanging off his rear quick release skewer. When I asked him what was up he said that someone had overshot the turn and done a sudden U in the road just as he was passing by. He ended up in the ditch. It was then that I noticed the blood on his hands and the road rash from when he had come off. Ouch. I wouldn't want to do 40+ miles biking and then a 13 mile run with those sorts of injuries.

The countryside was lovely with farms and very little traffic. Eventually, we reached the turn around just inside of Pennsylvania. This was particularly badly situated around a blind corner so you suddenly had to stop with little warning. Fortunately, many of the riders heading back warned those coming up--but not always as evidenced by the people who overshot the turn.

We headed back into town but I didn't see Lis and Ruan. The second leg was much like the first, although I backed off a bit after mile 40 to save something for the run. I parked my bike and tossed on my shoes to hit the road. Thankfully my T2 time was a bit better .

The run started off along the river. There were a lot of people around the transition area which always helped. What do you mean by that?My

legs felt good and I soon kicked into my target pace of 8:30/mile. It was sunny and very hot so at each aid station I poured water over my head. I was very careful with drinking as I had a slightly upset stomach. For some reason my regular nutrition plan hadn't worked well on the bike and after an hour of riding I had stopped taking anything. Felt like I was going to have a 'return meal ticket' as the Australians would say.

We ran along the river to a turnaround and then it was back towards the finish area. I saw Lis and Ruan sitting down reading and I yelled hello. They had wondered what had become of me. After passing the finish area we ascended up a gradual grade--was probably an old railway line--before turning up a VERY steep hill. The grade must have been 12%. Many were walking but I just put my head down, increased my turnover rate, and took shorter steps. Worked well and I was soon at the top - huffing and puffing mind you!



The race then took us along streets with a lot of up and down before we passed the transition area for lap 2. I was feeling very good with my run but still worried as I had blown up around mile 10 in my last 70.3 race. By mile 9 I decided that I could stomach something besides water so I ate a few energy chews. It was the first energy I'd had for some 40+ miles of racing and it felt good. As I passed Lis and Ruan the second time I told Ruan to meet me in 30 minutes before the finish line. It was then up the railway line, up the hill and on to the homeward run.

I felt really good and was able to increase my pace for the last few miles. In fact, I did the last mile in 7:03, helped in no small measure by the downhill. This showed I was too conservative with my pacing and should probably have gone for 8:00 or better as I had in my previous races, but it's amazing how blowing up affects one's confidence and I'm glad I was overly careful.

Ruan was waiting for me and he ran in with me for the last half mile or so. He was shouting out inspirational comments until I told him to shut up. After 70+ miles with the end in sight I didn't need any inspiration! He managed to grab a few 'action' photos as he ran beside me... We crossed the line together.

It was a good race and I felt much better afterwards than on my previous races. I was still able to walk and smile!

My times weren't great, but I had put behind me the blowing up on my last race so have my confidence back. Best of all, afterwards I shared with Ruan the joys of his first visit to a 'Dairy Queen'. Had to stoke up on carbs ...

Result: 5:18:30

Race Report: Hoi An Triathlon Vietnam

Jen Marquardt
ivylicker@hotmail.com

Work was sending me to Vietnam for the second time in three years. Having just finished an Ironman and in the middle of the peak triathlon season, I was going to miss several great races in the US. I started searching for races in Asia to see if I could coordinate an August race.

I found the first ever Olympic distance triathlon (there was a Sprint earlier in the year) being held in Vietnam right smack dab in the middle of when I was going to be there at a Five Star Resort on the beaches of Hoi An. Woo-hoo! This was perfect timing. I signed-up and paid an expensive \$130 for this privilege. My expectations were low—I wasn't convinced that there would be enough people to actually hold the event, I didn't know what to expect from the race management nor what the race course would really be like. But I did expect one thing - an adventure!



The night before the race TriBob, the race management company, hosted a pre-race briefing. It was a powerpoint with an overview of the course. The race director claimed that they

had been working hard with the local government party (communists) and the race would be a "closed course" ... he hoped. They smiled, and we all laughed. I didn't believe that for a moment, since Vietnamese use their motos and bikes to get around, and with the course going through little villages and a little town with busy streets, there was no way the course would be "closed" to local traffic when they weren't familiar with international sporting events being held in town and certainly not triathlons. But lets look at the bright side, there were typhoon warnings the two weeks prior to the race which fortunately turned out to be heavy rains the week prior. The Adventure was starting.

Pre-Race

I awoke at 4:30 so I could get dressed and bike the 3km to the Triathlon resort for breakfast. The day prior I forgot to get something for breakfast, and they had no powerbars or bagels with peanut butter in the markets . But the Golden Sands resort, in close collaboration with Tribob, had an early breakfast for the athletes so I was set. I waited around until 6am when the transition area was open to get my borrowed bike (New tri exp #1), set-up my stuff including borrowed shoes (New tri exp #2) on my numbered spot on the rack. The racks were made of bamboo (New tri exp #3).

Since there weren't too many athletes competing, There was one long chute for T1/T2.. A guy behind me had some tape, so I decided to ditch (?) tape the small water bottles to my bike (New tri exp #4). It seemed to work as I shook and rattled the bottles filled with Endurance Gatorade without their moving. I taped two bottle cages and one on top of the tri bars, so I would have enough fluids. The fourth bottle I left to stick in my tri back pocket (New tri exp #5) and the fifth bottle I left to gulp in T1/T2.

Locally-made bike racks. Notice the tape I used to keep my bottles in their holders.



I got body marked, with the largest numbers ever written on me (New tri exp #6), and they marked my front calves not thighs (New tri exp #7). Paul found me and took some photos and we wandered down the beach.

I got in the water and swam a bit to warm-up. The water was quite lovely, about 78-80 degrees with a slight current but no jellyfish or noticeable pollution. Afterwards, my jog bra was really dirty on the inside, so I must have gotten a lot of silt in my suit. I wonder how clean the water really was, since sanitation isn't as high as in a developed nation. At least the water felt good. I hadn't swum in salt water for over a year, so it felt great to float so high in the water without a wetsuit. In fact, I think this was my first ocean swim triathlon (New tri exp #8).

Swim

They delayed the race start by 15 minutes, stating that some bike race marshals were on "Vietnam Time" so were late. I don't think many showed up, since I didn't see too many on the course.

It was a mass start from the beach, which entailed a dash across the sand, giving me a distinct disadvantage since I'm not a strong runner. That means that slower swimmers would get ahead of me and I'd have to swim around them. But since this race was so small, it would be nothing compared to Ironman's swim, and thus I didn't really think or worry about it. I can swim over or around even the most aggressive men without any trouble (My water polo and rugby experience do come in handy sometimes).

We all lined up. I choose a spot to the left, hoping that most of the fast men would be on the right. It didn't quite turn out that way as the initial sprint put the fastest runners, not swimmers, out first. Plus the fastest man and women were to my left.

Counting down to the swim start. That's me in the multi-colored blue swim suit.



The race directors gave thanks to the local communist Party for their support (New tri exp #9), which probably meant paying them a small amount plus expenses to let us race (Vietnam's GDP per capita in 2004 was only \$514 or \$638 according to these figures.)

Five - Four- Three - Two - One. SPRINT!

It was a mad dash to the water, where I gently dove into the waves making sure not to leap onto anyone. (New tri exp #10) There was some thrashing, but everyone settled in pretty quickly to their own swimming pace. I was swimming next to a girl on my left, with a very quick turn-over. After a couple hundred meters I knew I wasn't going to have a great swim, I just haven't been swimming or exercising enough lately. The girl to my left pulled ahead and I just didn't have the speed nor desire to keep up with her. I did find a guy's feet to draft off of, although he didn't swim the straightest line so I couldn't reap the benefits of drafting too much.



I was feeling steady and strong in the first loop. I knew one girl was ahead, and perhaps 4-5 people total, with no one close behind me. At the end of the first loop I exited just behind a guy, but he sprinted way ahead of me on the beach run. I sprinted as best I could on the sand, in the longest swim-run ever (New tri exp #11), and dove back in, out of breath and my left quad hurting. Great, I hope I didn't pull a muscle trying to sprint when I haven't sprinted in weeks. I kept a steady pace until my heart rate slowed down, and just tried to swim the straightest lines possible, which meant following the rope when I could see it.

Finishing the first lap of the swim. The 50m beach run slowed me way down, but it was neat to run through the crowd twice.



T1

I'm not really sure where they timed the transitions, since the timing was all done by hand with teams of 6, they claimed at the pre-race meeting, although Paul only saw groups of

three. Not sure what six timers in one spot can do except get in each other's way.

So I was up on the beach, running along the bamboo corridor (New tri exp #12). I ran through the foot wash, and up onto the grass. A swarm of kids swept onto the course in front of me, so I brushed some of them aside while their teacher/coach/parent yelled for them to move (New tri exp #13).

I ran to my borrowed bike, pulling my swim suit top down. Luckily, the camera man who was standing in front of my bike moved behind me. I didn't need to be filmed removing my suit and standing there in my underwear. You see, I forgot my bike shorts (or they were stolen in Thailand or Laos because I swore I brought them), so I had to wear my swim suit in the swim. I didn't want to bike/run in my suit because I felt I would overheat with an extra layer on my belly, so wore undies and a sports bra under my suit (New tri exp #14). At least I was comfortable, except without bike shorts I only had this skirt to wear (New tri exp #15) which caught on the seat when I first got on the bike.

I put on some deodorant, sat down to wipe my feet and put my socks on, and chugged some Endurance Gatorade flown in all the way from Virginia, USA. I grabbed the bike and clogged along in my bike shoes. Clickety-clack. I carefully mounted the bike, pulling my skirt up and out of the way, and away I went.



Bike

Now was the fun part. I didn't have time to preview the course, because well, I didn't know how to communicate to someone to turn here or there, and I had no map. So I hoped to just follow someone ahead of me the whole time.

I liked having the aerobars on the bike, since I could relax and just pedal away. The second girl passed me quickly after T1. The roads were pretty good, with minimal dirt and holes. But of course there was lots of moto, bike, tractor, cow and car traffic. We had been promised painted arrows on the ground and plenty of race marshals on the course directing traffic.

A camera on a moto sped past, and while I noticed the camera at one point with lots of kids around, I sped by. Someone shouted, come back, come back. Whoops. I missed the first turn-around, the first time I've ever been off-course before (New tri exp #16). The painted arrows were not blue or red, they were large and white looking exactly like the "normal" street arrows on the ground. So I totally missed those since I was too busy waving to kids and saying "sin chau" or "hello" to the kids. The "race marshal" wasn't doing a darn thing to point the proper direction, I noticed as I turned around. I hoped he figured out how to point and wave after I blew by him.

I turned around, the kids laughed, I waved. OK, now I've got to really pay attention to the course. I starting looking for the arrows and anyone wearing a red shirt just standing on a street corner.

I knew the right turn was in about 3 km, so I noticed the big arrows and someone standing there in a red shirt. I think this one pointed after I pointed questioning the right turn. A guy passed me, so I tried to keep him in sight. I biked past little stores, locals, kids, a trash fire near a bridge, a large umbrella that blew into the street, and a one lane bridge with a big truck passing over it and me slamming on the brakes to ensure we both had enough room. The street traffic wasn't too bad and I didn't really feel that it slowed me down at this point.

The course came to an intersection with a local policeman standing there. I saw the arrows and went to the right. Teens were passing out water and gatorade, so I grabbed a water. I had already drunk the gatorade in my shirt and ripped the tape on the bottle on top. It didn't feel too hot and was still overcast, so I was feeling pretty good. I had taped two salt tablets on the bike frames, but I never felt like I needed them.

At the right turn, traffic was thicker and I had to hit the brakes a few times. I rode through a rice paddy and passed a guy who was looking for a spare tube. I did have a spare tube and CO2 cartridge in my bag, but was worried I might get a flat later in the course, so I rode on. I passed the two women ahead of me as they were coming back into town. The course veered right slightly, then had two left turns, returning to a right turn back onto the same road again.

When I passed the same guy in the rice paddy (New tri exp #17), this time with three red shirts standing around him I slowed down, unclipped, and gave him my spare tube (New tri exp #18). He also took the CO2 cartridge and adapter. I told him to return the adapter, which I don't think he ever did.

My favorite moment on the bike came when I passed a moto on the left (New tri exp #18), which is proper passing technique for USA

triathlon. I looked at him, he looked at me and we laughed. I also enjoyed seeing the cows and herdsmen (New tri exp #19), and avoiding the large restaurant-style umbrella that blew into the road (New tri exp #20).

Returning to that intersection where they were giving out water bottles and gatorade it got busy with local traffic. I had to use my brakes quite a bit the rest of the course. It didn't surprise me that several more men passed me the last 10k, since they were a little more gutsy with large machines. One VN-style tractor vehicle was visibly polluting the air and slowing traffic so we (trucks, cars, motos, bikes) took turns passing it, being careful to avoid all the traffic coming from the other side in a delicate game of chicken. There were two more trucks like that I had to pass (New tri exp #21 for crazy traffic and weird VN trucks).

The worst section of road was in the town of Hoi An, where trucks hogged the road, and a couple traffic lights slowed down to a crawl. One motivated cop did a fantastic job and allowed me to pass through the traffic he stopped on both sides of a busy intersection. Quite impressive to achieve that given the traffic patterns and lack of attendance by course marshals/police I experienced thus far. The other cops at the other intersections must have left for breakfast since no one was there. But that one single guy was great.

The last 6-7K I was quite familiar with as Paul and I had been riding the single road to the beach for two days now. We passed our hotel, another rice paddy, over a little bridge, through some beach wear shops, a really sandy road with a right turn, and then the final stretch. I felt great, drank most of my Gatorade (some fell down my leg as it splashed out of the extra large cages), and survived!

Turns out this was my fastest bike pace ever. Considering the flat course, that wasn't a surprise. With the two stops, a borrowed bike, borrowed shoes, heavy traffic, I was really happy with my result.

Quite unlike the typical white, middle-class, well-educated triathlon scene in the US. (New tri exp #22 - for competing in Vietnam)



T2

This was the first time that I removed my shoes prior to getting off my bike (New tri exp #23). The large bottom face of the Look pedal didn't feel very comfortable running out, so I thought I'd take the time on this triathlon to see what it was like. Easy enough, except the shoe caught the ground and fell off. I heard the kids laugh as my bike popped into the air, but I didn't realize the shoe fell off until after the race. I'm glad someone found and returned it, especially since it wasn't my shoe!

Other than that, this transition was solid. I placed the bike onto the rack, took two Gu, slipped on my shoes, grabbed my Ironman hat and took off.

Run

I was feeling pretty good at this point, in fact much better than I expected. My legs never had that post-bike jelly effect that sometimes happens. There was a water stop right before turning into the village, so I grabbed a cold sponge and squeezed it over my head and body and drank some Gatorade.

The run was flat and passed through a little fishing village (New tri exp #24) which did stink of rotting fish at times. It was neat to turn corners and run through the village as I didn't quite know what to expect, and there were some locals staring and kids waving. I started getting hot. Really hot. The first water stop was right outside the hotel, but the second stop felt like it was two miles from the first one. I was just about to walk, feeling overheated and spent, when I saw the water stop just outside the village. Around this time Paul appeared on the bike we rented and told me to keep it slow and don't push it due to the "real feel" of 100+. I didn't need encouragement. I tacitly agreed since I didn't need a trip to the hospital for an added "adventure".

I slowly jogged to the second water stop, got a cold water bottle and some gatorade. At this point, I started dumping cold water on my head and body to keep as cool as possible, so I was soaking wet when I finished. I kept that water bottle for the rest of the race for a little cooling off shower. It was a short jog to the turn-around and immediately back to the water stop. I got more Gatorade and fresh water to pour on my head.

This next stretch was nice along sand dunes, with a huge sign indicating a lovely resort to be built here. Next came a stench of something gross, which didn't help with the heat, humidity, and teasing nausea. But I kept a steady pace, getting passed by one girl on the this stretch and lots of men throughout the entire run. Now I was the fourth female, so I was still going to get an award which was an added incentive at this point to keep jogging.



I chugged along through the next water stop, to the run turn-around, and right back to the water stop. I knew it was a long way to the next water, so I liberally applied the cold water sponge. While I don't know what the pace of my two loops was, I'm certain my second loop was 3-5 minutes slower since I felt I walked a lot. Considering that I anticipated walking most of this, my 10:12 pace was something to be happy with.



At the last turn-around I saw two women closing in on me. One I had chatted with on the beach; she was living in Laos doing independent energy work across Asia while her husband worked in Laos. We smiled at each other. But I knew I couldn't walk if I wanted that damn award. I'm not fast, but I'm still competitive and would fight for next-to-last if I had to.

It was almost over. Paul was biking next to me, encouraging me on. He left to take photos at the finish. Almost there. More water dumped over my head. No energy left for a sprint. It's over. Whew.

I crossed the finish line and chugged a gatorade, poured cold water over my body, drank another cold gatorade, and then sat by my bike to cool my core down. I made it! I survived the traffic and heat.

I'm so glad I had this opportunity to race a triathlon in a developing country. Perhaps I'll return in twenty years to race another one, so I can see how much progress the country has made! In the mean time, there's a whole wide world out there waiting to be explored.

Post-Event

After the race I quickly gathered my things, returned the bike and shoes to their owner, gave Mathe and Nathalie a Lake Placid Ironman volunteer shirt for their generosity, and mounted the one speed clunker and rode back to the hotel for a shower and nap.



We ventured back into town for lunch and more clothes shopping, then returned for yet another shower (three showers a day here). As part of the race entry fee there was this fancy award banquet (New tri exp #25) with buffet style dinner, drinks, and live band. We sat with the race Doctor until he disappeared, an Australian, and his VN girlfriend who didn't say much. Paul and the Aussie talked Aussies Rules Football which Paul knows lots about for an American. It was expensive for Paul (\$25) since he didn't race (local food is \$1-3 for a nice meal). The food looked really nice, but was typical buffet style and didn't taste so great. I did manage to get several beers and wine glasses to celebrate my finish and survival.

They passed out awards and I won...a lamp (New tri exp #26). Yes, a lamp. It won't work in the USA with an adapter, but it does match my other VN furniture and I actually have other lamps similar in style. So it will fit perfectly in my house. I love it for an eclectic award!

So that's 27 new triathlon experiences. Overall, it was a great experience and I'm so glad I did it.

One final comment, I have conflict with the high cost of the entry fee and surrounding poverty of Hoi An. I wish the event would have made a

significant donation to a local charity or two. I would have gladly skipped the award banquet knowing that money would have gone to help the little fishing village or Hoi An locals in some capacity. After some research the Peace Corps isn't yet in Vietnam, so I wonder how many charities have branches in Hoi An and how feasible it would be to find an ethical, trustworthy charity to donate to. One that I'm familiar with is <http://www.roomtoread.org/>.

Race Schedule

Ole Villadsen
villadso@yahoo.com

Race length	Name	Location	web site
September			
Oly	Annapolis Triathlon	Annapolis, VA	www.tricolumbia.org
½ Iron/ Sprint	Patriot's Half & Lady Patriot Triathlon	Williamsburg, VA	www.setupevents.com
Oly	Big Lick Triathlon	Huddleston, VA	www.setupevents.com
Oly/Sprint	General Smallwood Tri	Gen Smallwood Park	www.setupevents.com
½ Iron / Sprint	Delaware Diamondman® Triathlon	Bear, DE	www.piranha-sports.com
Sprint	Cape Henlopen Tri and Du	Lewes, DE	www.piranha-sports.com
Sprint	Patriot's Triathlon	Bath, VA	www.piranha-sports.com
Oly	Make-A-Wish Sea Colony Triathlon	Bethany Beach, DE	www.tricolumbia.org
Iron	ChesapeakeMan Ultra	Cambridge, MD	www.tricolumbia.org
½ Iron	SavageMan Triathlon	Deep Creek Lake, MD	www.savagemantri.org
October			
Sprint	Osprey Sprint Triathlon	Public Landing, MD	www.mdcoastalbays.org/osprey/info.php
Sprint	Giant Acorn Triathlon	Lake Anna, VA	www.setupevents.com
November			
Du	YMCA Duathlon	Smithfield, VA	www.setupevents.com
Du	Cape Henry 10-miler & Duathlon	Va Beach, VA	http://www.capehenry.kalerrunning.com/

On the Web: Sites of Interest to TriCATs

www.runnersworld.com/smartcoach	Creates a customized training program for free – and it is a fairly sensible one at that!
http://www.steverunner.com/podcast.htm#What is a PodCast	This is an excellent site with 1 h podcasts prepared by a runner. They have different themes each week and are very professionally done.
http://www.performbetter.com/	Site with a variety of gear for functional training and rehabilitation.
http://www.fitnessrocks.org/	Weekly podcast reviewing the latest medical research on the relationship between lifestyle choices and health.
http://completerunning.com	Site dedicated to providing information on a range of topics of interest to runners.
http://triathlon.racechecklist.com/	Web site which lets you customize and print out a race check list.

Please send your favorite web sites to: editor@trcats.org

Gadgets and Gifts

	<p>What: Detergent</p> <p>Title: Assos Active Wear Cleanser</p> <p>Cost: \$17 from www.assos.com</p> <p>Why: Designed to be used with delicate sports gear</p>
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TriCATs Sponsor Directory

Sponsor	TriCATs Member Benefits
Conte's Bicycles	15% off of accessories 5% off bikes 10% off bike fits
Principle Fitness 925 Rogers Drive Falls Church, VA 22042 (571) 278-4581 www.principlefitness.com eric@principlefitness.com	Discounts on all group training programs; \$50 off the start-up fee of any coaching program from any Principle Fitness coach. <i>A good coach needs to know not only "how", but more importantly "why" the athlete is training.</i>
Bonzai Sports http://tribonzai.com 2826 Fallfax Drive Falls Church, VA 22042 Phone: (703) 280-2248	10% off of accessories 10% off bikes 5% rebate to TriCATs for ALL web sales (does not include sale or closeout items or wetsuit rentals) Website Discount Code: tricats2007 (all lowercase)
Positively Chiropractic and Dynamic Kinesiology 5105A Backlick Road Annandale, VA 22003 (703) 642-8685 www.posichiro.com	Complimentary Sports Injury Prevention Examination; 10% off Running-Specific Orthotics. <i>Always Moving Forward</i>
Old Town Massage Center 312 South Washington Street, 3C Alexandria, VA 22314 (703) 518-8484 OTMCMassage@aol.com www.oldtownmassagecenter.com	\$10.00 off any massage of 60 minutes or longer (includes the purchase of gift certificates). Appointments are best booked in advance, especially for evening appointments. <i>Your Partner in Performance</i>
L.T. Therapy, Inc. Circle Towers Office Building 9401 Lee Highway, Suite 102 Fairfax, VA 22042 (703) 309-7624	10% off the hour massage price <i>Activating stabilized movement patterns through therapeutic exercise and massage</i>
Transitions Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork Circle Towers Office Building 9401 Lee Highway, Suite 102 Fairfax, VA 22042 (703) 385-4785 www.transitionsmassage.com barb@transitionsmassage.com	10% off each therapeutic massage session with TriCATs ID card (Please be aware that you will need to schedule in advance as I am often booked out 2-6 weeks depending on the time of year.) <i>Geared toward injury prevention, rehabilitation and recovery of the endurance athlete and chronic pain client</i>

Please support our club sponsors.